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OBSERVATIONS ON HOLY CROSS ABBEY, AND ITS
CELEBRATED MONUMENT.

BY T. L. COOKE, ESQ.

[*Read at the Meeting of September 5th.*]

A DIFFERENCE of opinion has of late arisen in the antiquarian world respecting the use of the ornate and stately monument standing in the wall on the south side of the choir in the Abbey of Holy Cross, and it has recently excited deep interest with those addicted to studying the history of our monastic buildings, of which many, like that of Holy Cross, are fascinating and sublime even in their decay. The structure in question has been taken by Dr. O'Halloran to be the burial place of Donald O'Brien, once king of Limerick, and who was an early benefactor to Holy Cross Abbey. In later times an eminent and learned writer on Irish Antiquities, Dr. Petrie, has denied its being the last resting place of the monarch named by O'Halloran, and he supposes it the sepulchre of the Lady Eleanor Butler, Countess of Desmond. Subsequently to the expression of Dr. Petrie's opinion another indefatigable and worthy writer, Sir William Betham, published a paper in which he sought to establish that this mysterious structure was the monument of Elizabeth, daughter of Gerald Earl of Kildare, and who became the wife of James, fourth Earl of Ormonde. Dr. Petrie then came again into the field with arguments against Sir William Betham's position. A talented and still more recent writer, Mr. Prim, has recently taken pains to controvert the opinions of the three writers already named. He has adopted a new view of the subject in a paper read before the Kilkenny Archæological Society. Mr. Prim's theory is, that the structure never was the tomb of any person, but that it was one of the *sedilia* formerly constructed in churches as seats for the officiating clergy during certain parts of the more solemn high masses offered up by the church.

It may appear presumption in me to dissent from an opinion on such a subject as this, expressed by any one of those four antiquaries. Nevertheless, I must for many reasons reject the positions maintained by these gentlemen.

Tradition and history concur in designating this beautiful monument by the title of the tomb of "*The Good Woman's Son*," or as he was called by the peasantry within my own memory, and before they had ceased to use the vernacular tongue, *mac na mna maith*, i.e. "the son of the good woman."* Archdall was wrong when he thought

* Others call him *Leanbh na mna maith*, from *leanb* child, and *na mna maith* of the good woman.

it the tomb of the good woman herself. Nevertheless, even the blunder of that laborious writer is of use, for it shews that he had heard something of the tradition upwards of sixty years ago, although he had mistaken it. I was born and spent the early portion of my life within a few miles of the Abbey of Holy Cross. Many a summer's day have I whiled away about its ruins, so that the building scarcely contained a visible stone with which I was not familiar. Neither was there a scrap of traditionary lore, or even a legend relating to the venerable pile, which I have not heard over and over again. I have witnessed the performance of pilgrimages in the neighbouring thatched chapel, as also at *the tomb*, and at the blessed well there, previously to the latter being stopped up by order of the Archbishop, Dr. Bray. Possessed of such means of correct information, I assert that the common tradition of the country in respect to the monument I am now writing of, was, from forty to fifty years ago, or more, that it was the *sepulchre of the good woman's son*. It is not likely that the remains of either Eleanor of Desmond, or of Elizabeth of Ormonde, would be deposited in "the narrow cell" previously occupied by the son of the good woman, although, as will be seen in the sequel of this paper, his resting place was not privileged against intrusion by others not equally delicate or fastidious.

Even in the absence of the tradition just mentioned, a close inspection of the monument itself ought to dispel the idea that it was not a tomb. Its table, if I may use the expression, is a flagstone, having, as I think, vestiges of a sepulchral cross carved upon it. It may, perchance, be supposed that such a flag was carelessly placed there by some heedless operatives employed in the erection of this piece of antiquity. Such an hypothesis would, however, be wholly at variance with the elaborate carving and careful workmanship displayed in all other parts of the monument. The notion of its being a sedile is refuted not only by the presence of the stone slab with sepulchral cross, but also by the fact that the spaces within the columns are too narrow to accommodate with a suitable and convenient seat an ecclesiastic, arrayed in the loose and broad robes appropriate to a solemn high mass. It may also be here remarked that, if the debris and rubbish, which have accumulated on the floor of the church, were to be removed, the supposed seat would then probably prove to be too high for any person to make use of it.

It is thought that the Abbey of Holy Cross was founded originally by Murtagh O'Brien, grandson of the illustrious monarch Brian Boromhe, after he had received from Pope Pascal II. in the year 1110, a portion of the cross on which the blessed Redeemer suffered for the offences of mankind. Subsequently to Murtagh's death, the Church and Monastery were completed by Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick. These royal benefactors of Holy Cross Abbey, have been often mentioned by those who wrote on the subject of that abode of religion. The

identical Rood of the cross, so given by Murtagh, or whoever else was the donor, is at present in the possession of the Most Reverend the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel. It is enclosed in a silver case, made in the shape of a *double cross*, like that represented on the armorial ensigns of Holy Cross Abbey, of which a sketch copied from the "Triumphalia" of Father Hartry, is sent with this paper. The silver cross, which contained *the Rood* at Holy Cross Abbey, is, as well as I remember it, about nine inches long. I have not seen it opened. It probably contains inside, a glass cross, wherein the portion of the real cross was deposited.

It appears that the monks of Holy Cross did not limit the exhibition of the relic in their keeping to the mere veneration of the faithful *within their abbey*, for a manuscript, entitled "Triumphalia," herein after more fully referred to, shews that they carried it about for the purpose of its being sworn upon. I translate the following from that manuscript, and it relates to the broils, at that time not unusual, between O'Dwyre, the Lord of Kilnamanagh in the County Tipperary, and M^r Walter Burke, who was Lord of the neighbouring territory of Ileigh in the same county. Kilnamanagh, the then country of O'Dwyre, has been since united to the territories of Ileigh and Kilnalongurty, and these three ancient denominations form the modern barony known by the name of Kilnamanagh.

To return to the "Triumphalia" it says, "when Mr. Diermot O'Dwyer of Kilnamanagh and Mr. Richard Burke of Borres (now Burrisoleigh,) as the old MS. herein before referred to, testified, were in the habit of harassing each other with constant wars, they bound themselves by oath, taken before the most Holy Cross, which was brought to them by two monks, to the observance of a perpetual treaty of friendship, which being done, the monks, returning to their monastery, found the river commonly called Kearan swollen beyond its usual bounds." The Triumphalia then proceeds with a story of how the river, having miraculously opened a passage for the bearers of the relic, permitted them to cross over, but they carelessly lost their precious charge during the night, and much to their joy found, on their arrival at Holy Cross, that it had preceeded them to the monastery and was there in its case before them. The Triumphalia notes that the miracle just related happened in the *first* egress of the holy relic from the monastery. Hence it appears that it was taken on such journeys more than once; and, the words of a submission made to Luke Archer, who was Abbot of Holy Cross in 1621, by David Hennessy, a refractory friar, shew that he, Hennessy, was previously in the habit of taking the Rood out of the monastery; for I find in it the following words; viz.,—"promitto insuper me non ministraturum seu ostensurum aliquam reliquam vel crucem intra vel extra præfatum monasterium sine speciali mandato et venia predicti Dni. Lucæ Abb. sen ejus successoris vel assignati." The foregoing document is to be found, with some others relating to said

Hennesy, in the *Triumphalia*, and it bears date the 12th of February 1621. It seems to supply part of the succession of Abbots in Holy Cross monastery, for it sets forth that said Hennesy was appointed by the Abbot Richard Troulow, on whose decease, said Archer became Abbot. It designates him as Vicar General of the Cistercian order in the kingdom of Ireland. This seems to prove that the Cistercian order held its ground at Holy Cross long subsequent to the inquisition for suppressing abbeys which was in the twentieth year of the reign of Elizabeth, as appears from the Inquisition, No. 9, on the roll of that reign in the office of the Chief Remembrancer, Exchequer, Dublin.

Besides the royal patrons of Holy Cross Abbey, who have been already mentioned, and are more commonly known, there was another who seems to be almost unknown, save in the local tradition of the country around Holy Cross. The endowment through the instrumentality of this other benefactor is believed to have been much more ample and noble than those which had preceded it. The personage to whom it is attributed, has been handed down by tradition under the now mysterious appellation of "THE GOOD WOMAN."

In Ware's writers of Ireland, as edited by Harris, Father John, alias Malachy Hartry, is noticed amongst the number of Irish scribes. He was born in Waterford, and was a Cistercian friar, residing first in the abbey of Nucale in Spain, and afterwards in the abbey of Holy Cross in the County of Tipperary. He wrote on vellum an account of this celebrated religious house, under the title, "*Triumphalia chronologica de coenobia Sanctæ Crucis Sacræ ordinis Cisterciensis in Hibernia, in quibus plura a salutifero S. Crucis ligno patrata miracula, aliaque memoratu desiderata illustrantur.*" This book, which is mentioned by Harris, seems to have been written between 1640 and 1649. The first mentioned date is on the title, but I have met with the last mentioned in parts of the manuscript. I had Hartry's manuscript in my possession for a long time, about thirty years ago. It was lent to me by the late Rev. Patrick Meagher, who then was parish priest of Holy Cross. Those wishing now to refer to it will find it in the Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal library at Thurles.

The account of the foundation and re-edification of Holy Cross Abbey contained in Father Hartry's manuscript speaks first of the grant by King Mortagh, and next of that by King Donagh O'Brien. As these grants are already known I shall not occupy time by dwelling on them. Neither will I at present stop here to particularise the confirmation by King John. The history of the greatest endowment being little known to the public, I shall proceed to the circumstances attending it.

Before I give the account of this farther endowment, which is due to the *good woman*, it may not be unacceptable to the antiquary to be told that Holy Cross was, as the *Triumphalia* informs us, in ancient times, long before the Abbey was founded there, denominated *na*

h-oct lamha, which signifies. "The eight hands." The same manuscript relates that the place acquired that name by reason of an anchorite who sojourned there, having effected, through the virtue of his prayers, a miracle, causing the hands of four persons, who had committed some depredation at his hallowed retreat, to be cemented to a tree then growing over the holy well, for which this place was celebrated from very early times, until within the last forty years. The hands of the delinquents were so firmly affixed to the tree, that the operation of amputation was resorted to for the purpose of restoring the men to liberty. The Triumphalia is embellished with an illuminated representation of the circumstance, wherein the eight hands are depicted adhering to the tree and the blood is seen gushing profusely from the wounds.

Returning from the foregoing digression, I come to the third and greatest foundation of the Holy Cross Monastery. The primary cause of this foundation was, in the words of the Triumphalia, as far as same is legible, thus—"Secundâ jam relatâ hujus abbatiae erectione occasionis serie, modo restat ut de 3tia latifundii ditione et amplissimorum edificiorum structurâ, longe excellentiori quam quæ per serenissimum felicis memoriæ regem Donaldum prenotatum, juxta debitum ritum, quam de Patrum communium traditione non sperandâ, tam ex veteri MS. Hibernice conscripto, paucis et veris perstringam, misterii enarrationem accipe. Quidem Princeps, regiâ oriundus stirpe, et regis Angliæ prosapia, sui nominis splendorem ducens (in antiquo dicto M.S. dolentibus animabus invenimus initiale presentis historiæ folium omnino evulsum fuisse, in quo regis reginæque nomina, et alia longe desiderata, annotata fuere) videndi Hibernicos mores et vivendi formam desiderio flagrabat, ut M.S. testatur, colligendum, Sti Petri denarium (qui summo pontifici Rmo. annuatim solvebatur in Hibernia) auctoritate regia missum esse præfatum principem. Sublatâ tandem deliberatione itineri se committere, et huc in Hiberniam transfretare determinanti, annulus a reginâ matre traditur, ipsi injungente, si forte in infortunium aliquod incidisset, annuli remissione pro infalibili veritatis symbole certam faceret ipsam, et auxilium inde cito obtinere sperandum. Iter per hoc regnum facienti et per densissimum nemus pra — duorum milliam. ab hoc nostro monasterio a parte accidentali distantem quidem ex progenie Fogartorum obviam principi dedit, cujus insidiis soli — princeps innocens interfectus est. De Fogartorum familia—"

The Triumphalia is legible no farther on this subject. The O'Fogartys' mentioned in the foregoing passage evidently were the chieftains or toparchs of Ely-Hy-Fhogarta, now the barony of Eliogarth, in which Holy Cross Abbey is situated. It is not improbable but that Father Hartry dealt with that sept, which had occasioned the death of the son of his community's benefactor (namely the "mac na mna maith," or *good woman's son*), in no very measured terms. It appears from a memorandum on the manuscript of the Triumphalia that it was

a member of the Fogarty family who presented it to the late worthy Roman Catholic Archbishop, Thomas Bray; and, therefore, it may have been some of the Fogartys themselves that rendered illegible their chastisement by the Friar's pen.

If my memory is not fallacious Father Hartry's book even gives a picture of the monument as that "*Filii Bonæ Mulieris*."*

The tradition of the country (and such tradition is seldom in error) seems in itself sufficient to establish the fact of the remnant of antiquity in question being a *tomb* and not a *sedile*—nay, it even goes to stamp it as *the tomb of the good woman's son*. But the evidence of Father Hartry who, it must be borne in mind, wrote upwards of two hundred years ago, and who, as he informs us, founded his statement as well "*Patrum communium traditione*" as on the then ancient Irish mutilated manuscript he refers to, proves beyond all doubt that this remarkable piece of architecture was a tomb, and that it certainly never was one of the *sedilia*. Had it been a *sedile*, surely Father Hartry, a clergyman belonging to the monastery of Holy Cross, could not have been ignorant of its use? It was familiar to him notwithstanding its being now such a matter of uncertainty with us, after the lapse of two additional centuries. He had no object to gain by misrepresentation. We therefore must believe what he tells us when he writes that it was the tomb of the *good woman's son*.

A confirmation of the position that it was a tomb will be found in a story related by Father Hartry respecting it. That writer tells us that, one Peter Purcell (probably one of the Baron of Loughmoe's family) having caused himself to be interred in the monument of the Good Woman's son about the year 1584, a constant falling of water from the groins of the arches of the Abbey took place in consequence of the profanation. The falling of water mentioned in this passage of the *Triumphalia* I take to have been that still recorded in the unwritten legends of Holy Cross as a miraculous one, by the appellation *Braon Sinsiordha*, which signifies in English, "the constant drop." When I was a boy a hole used to be pointed out in a stone near the monument as having been worn by this drop in former times, "*non vi sed sepe cadendo*." But to return to the story in the *Triumphalia*—it tells us that at length, about the feast of St. John the Baptist, in the year 1603, Sir Hugh Purcell, who was son-in-law to the deceased Peter, was enjoined in a vision to get his father-in-law's body taken out of the monument. Sir Hugh, being unable to go in person, sent a servant with a letter and money to Sir David Hennessy, who at that time filled the office of *Parochus* at the monastery; Sir David thereupon led work-

* Since I wrote the above I find there is, beyond doubt, a painting representing this monument given in the *Triumphalia*. It serves to identify the structure now the subject of antiquarian speculation, as being the same designated by Father Hartry "*The tomb of the Good Woman's son*."—T. L. C.

men to the tomb, from whence so offensive a smell issued, that it was with much perseverance and difficulty the persons employed were able to effect their object. On the removal of Peter Purcell's body from the tomb, the falling of "the constant drop" immediately ceased. It is needless to add, that the *Braon Sinsiordha* is now known only by tradition. The hole in the stone is still to be seen, or was so some years ago; but the monotonous and measured sound of the falling liquid globule no longer strikes upon the ear.

The following monkish tale is also extracted from the *Triumphalia*. While I give it as concerning the tomb of the Good Woman's Son, I do not ask the Kilkenny Archæological Society either to believe or disbelieve it. My object in transcribing this story is merely to shew by it the high degree of veneration in which this monument was held long before the modern controversy regarding it was thought of. Such veneration arose from a belief that the beautiful structure was the resting place of one whose memory was held, if not sacred, at all events in very good repute. Nor was the respect, so paid to the monument, transitory or ephemeral. I have already written, that the monument and well were even in my own time, much revered, and that they were used as stations in the devotions of pilgrims. The well was situated between the abbey and the river Suir. I remember to have seen religious devotees performing, about it, rounds as they were called upon their bare knees. The *Triumphalia* records that, in the year 1628, the blessed well and monument of Holy Cross were in high esteem for effecting of miracles; and, as an illustration, it relates that one John O'Cullenan, a carpenter by trade, deposed before Thomas Walsh, who was Archbishop of Cashel, that on the 14th of May, 1628, he was seized with great pain in his side during the night—that the next morning he attempted to work, but being unable to do so, and labouring under great depression of spirits, he betook himself to bed. However, having remembered the wonderful well, and *his fellow workmen recommending him to have recourse for a cure to the monument of the Good Woman's Son*, he did resort to them as remedies. After having done so he immediately felt an acute pain; but he soon regained his former strength, and finished the work he had been previously to his illness engaged on. O'Cullenan's fellow workmen likewise deposed to a similar effect before Archbishop Walsh, in the presence of Luke Archer, then Abbot of Holy Cross, and of several other persons. The *Triumphalia* having given the particulars of the Prince's death, subsequently mentions that his ring, the faithful token of his dying wishes, was conveyed to the Queen Mother. The token was accompanied with a request to her to become the protectress of the religious community, by some of whose members her son was probably attended in his last moments, and in whose Church his body was at all events destined to be interred. It is also likely that some of the Prince's retinue found shelter in the abbey after their master's death. The manuscript infers as the result the

grant to the Abbey of power over *extensive tracts of land*, and *also the erection of very large additional buildings for its use*.

The Triumphalia leads us to believe that Father Hartry supposed the Good Woman to have been the wife of Henry II. King of England; and in accordance therewith, that the unfortunate prince slain by O'Fogarty was her son. While the account of the occupant of the monument, as recorded in the Triumphalia, agrees with the popular tradition in calling him the *Good Woman's Son*, it is very difficult to conclude that he was the offspring of Queen Eleanora, who was daughter of William, fifth duke of Aquitaine. The Triumphalia enumerates her sons as "Henricum, Ricardum, Galfredum, Johannem, Gulielmum, atque Philippum. Sextus hic junior natu in juventute moritur."

It must be observed here, that the Triumphalia mentions Queen Eleanora having *six* sons by her second husband, while Betham's tables and those of Anderson mention no more than *five*. Philip is the son about whom the discrepancy exists, and the Triumphalia says of him, that he died in *his youth*, which might be quite reconcileable with his having been the "Princeps innocens" slain by O'Fogarty. But the Triumphalia does not say that this Philip was that person; and indeed it is probable that if he was that personage, Father Hartry would have called him directly the *son of the King* of England, rather than say that he was "*regis Angliæ prosapiæ*." It therefore cannot be this Philip who was son to the *Good Woman*.

It is to be apprehended that the Triumphalia has mistaken the proper epoch, and has fallen into an anachronism in seeking to discover the Good Woman's son during the reign of King John. It is likewise very probable that the *third* royal grant, to which that manuscript alludes, was the confirmation or rather confirmations made to Holy Cross Abbey by Henry III. in 1233 and 1234. The charter of King John takes no notice of more than one antecedent grant, namely, that by Donald O'Brien King of Limerick; and it altogether omits mentioning any previous grant by Murtagh. Therefore, according to John's charter, the first grant was that by Donald, and John's own was the second. From this it follows that the charter of Henry III. was the extensive endowment alluded to in the Triumphalia. It is farther to be remarked, that the grant of King John does not confer much on the abbey in addition to what King O'Brien had already bestowed. Some personal privileges to the clergy, such as immunity from payment of toll, was all that John gave them. His charter contained no additional grant of land—neither were the extensive and splendid buildings alluded to by the Triumphalia erected for some reigns subsequent to his time, so that Father Hartry's expression, "*latifundii ditione et amplissimorum edificiorum structura*," was not applicable to anything he had done. It is evident that Hartry was himself only seeking for the name of the King and Queen, which the loss of the leaf torn out of the old Irish manuscript he frankly owns prevented his being certain of.

My principal object in laying this paper before the Kilkenny Archæological Society, is to prove that the Holy Cross monument is the tomb of *the Good Woman's Son*, rather than that of any other person, and to show that it was really a tomb, and not a sedile. I therefore offer the observations which follow, more with a view to assist others in their future researches to discover who was the personage known under the mysterious title of the *Good Woman's Son*, than in the hope of presently establishing his identity myself in a satisfactory manner.

In the annals of the Four Masters (ad. ann. 1233) there is an account of a son of an *English Queen* having been in *Ireland and having fallen there*. The passage runs as follows:—"William, the son of Hugo de Lacy (whose mother was daughter to King Roderick O'Connor), -marched with the English of Meath, into Brefney against Cathal O'Reilly, where they committed great depredations; but a party of O'Reilly's people overtook De Lacy and his chiefs while conveying the plunder, and gave them battle, in which William Brit, and a number of English nobles were slain, and William de Lacy with many others were wounded; they were driven from the country without prisoners or plunder, and De Lacy, Charles the son of Cathal Gall O'Connor; *Feorus Fionn the son of the English Queen*, and Dermot Bearnagh O'Melaghlin, *died of the wounds they received* in the battle of Mona-Crann-Chaoim, and Niall Sionagh O'Catharnaidh, lord of the men of Teffia, also died of the wounds he received in this battle in his own house, after making his will and receiving extreme unction.

From the foregoing statement of the Four Masters, we cannot entertain a doubt that Feorus Fionn, or Feorus the Fair, who was son to the Queen of England, was in Ireland in the year 1233. The excellent and persevering Irish scholar, Owen Connellan, who translated the Four Masters for the late Mr. Geraghty, supposes very justly the Queen in question to be Isabella, the widow of King John, who, after that monarch's decease, married Hugh Le Brun, Count de la Marche in France. The learned Mr. O'Donovan, who translated the same annals for Messrs. Hodges and Smith, also takes Isabella to be the queen to whom they allude, and he translates Feorus Fionn, Pierce the Fair.

There is reason to be assured that soon after the accession of Henry III. to the throne, his Irish subjects proposed that he should send his mother, the said Queen Isabella, or his brother, to Ireland; for they were favourites with the people here. The king's answer to that proposition is to be found in Taaffe's History of Ireland (Vol. I. p. 76). It is addressed to Geoffrey de Marisco, the king's deputy, and says, "as to sending our lady the Queen-mother or our brother to Ireland, our answer is, that, taking the advice and assent of our faithful subjects, we shall do that which shall be expedient to our interest

and the interest of our realm." Henry, in the course he thus pursued, was probably right as regarded himself; for his brother, if sent over hither, might ultimately establish an independent sovereignty to the prejudice of Henry's interests; but it was a bad resolve for Ireland. This Feorus Fionn must have been son of Queen Isabella; for he is mentioned under the year 1233. Now Henry III. had no Queen then, not having married his second wife, Eleanor, daughter of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence, until the year 1236.

The time assigned by the Four Masters for the wounding of Feorus the Fair, accords with the cause given in the Triumphalia for the visit to this country of the Good Woman's Son, namely—for the purpose of collecting Peter's Pence. Thus the unfortunate Prince, whoever he was, is said to have arrived, according to the account of the old Irish manuscript, quoted by the Triumphalia, "*colligendum sancti Petri donarium, qui summo Pontifici Romano annuatim solvebatur in Hibernia.*" The king is also said to have given his authority for the good woman's son coming to proceed with that collection, for to the foregoing quotation is added, "*regia auctoritate missum esse.*" We know that in the year 1229, Pope Gregory IX, sent to collect a subsidy of one tenth of all moveable goods in England, France, and Ireland; (2 Mac Geoghegan Hist. d'Irl. 64.) and that the Irish were obliged to sell their moveables to pay it. The clergy thought this particularly oppressive on themselves. The Pope having made this demand in 1229, it must have taken some time to arrange its collection, and influential agents had also to be employed for the purpose. Who could have been deemed more fit for such an office than the young and respected brother (query—*half* brother) of the King, by whom or by whose mother the Irish had solicited to be governed? If we suppose Feorus Fionn to have come to Ireland on that mission it substantially reconciles the Four Masters and the Triumphalia. Thus, the Four Masters write that Feorus Fionn was son to the *Queen of England*, and do not call him son to the King, either deceased or regnant. The Triumphalia denominates its hero as the *Good Woman's Son*, while it brings him no nearer to the King than "*quidem princeps regia oriundus stirpe et regis Angliæ prosapiæ*"—*a certain prince arisen from the royal stock and of the race of the King of England.* All this Feorus Fionn was by the mother's side. The Triumphalia fixes the death of the Good Woman's Son to the time of his coming to collect the dues of St. Peter, which must have been some time after the issuing of the Pope's rescript in 1229; and the Four Masters place Feorus Fionn's death in 1233. Both authorities thus accord as to time.—The Triumphalia, in reference to the Good Woman's Son, speaks not of the queen Regnant, but uses the expression "*a regina matre,*" i.e., the Queen Mother (the identical term used by Henry III. in his letter to his deputy De Marisco); and the translators of the Four Masters say that Feorus Fionn was a son of Isabella, widow of King

John, by Hugh Le Brun, who was Count de la Marche, Lord of Luisignan and Valence in Poiteau, &c.

In the next place, the Triumphalia attributes the munificent patronage thirdly extended to Holy Cross Abbey, to the influence of the Good Woman, in consequence of the circumstances attending her son's death, and we find in fact, that Feorus Fionn having been killed some time in 1233, King Henry III. in the September of that same year, and the November of 1234, made grants to this abbey. What these grants were I cannot now say, for I have not been able to find the official record of them. They are mentioned, however, in Archdall's Monasticon. We further find that William Bret is one of the English noblemen whom the Four Masters say were killed at the time Feorus Fionn was wounded; and we know that the Brets were Lords of the manors of Coilath and of Fidart, both of which lay not far from Holy Cross and in the same county with it. We may therefore suppose Feorus Fionn to have been retreating, wounded, from Mona-Crann-Chaoín towards the possessions of Bret when he met his death. Another circumstance must not be forgotten—thus the Triumphalia describes the Good Woman's Son as "*princeps innocens*," and Feorus Fionn, at the time of his death in 1233, could not have been more than seven years of age, as Queen Isabella could not have been married to King John in 1216.

The relationship between Feorus Fionn and Henry III. of England would account for at least some of the armorial bearings on the monument. After the death of King John in 1216, his widow, Isabella, married Hugh Le Brun Count de la Marche already mentioned. He was Lord of Luisignan and Valence in Pictou, Earl of Turrin, and Viscount de Corvice. The recorded issue of this marriage was William de Valence, Aymer, Isabel, Joan and Alice. It is now pretty certain from the Four Masters, that Feorus Fionn, or Pierce the Fair, may be added to the foregoing. Having lost his life when young, and while he was unused to the world and its deceits—while he was as yet *Princeps innocens*, as the Triumphalia styles the Good Woman's Son, and without obtaining by his valour or being entitled to any honours, those inherent to high birth excepted, Feorus Fionn has been omitted by genealogists from the catalogue of the children of Queen Isabella by Hugh Le Brun.

I have already mentioned that the arms on the monument are wholly without distinction of either metal or tincture to guide heraldic investigation, there not being anything in the carving of them to indicate either. The first shield on the dexter side is charged with a cross. This undoubtedly is not the peculiar form of cross used in the arms of the abbey, which was a *double cross*, as has been already shewn. This first escutcheon, therefore, may be taken to be charged either with the cross of St. George or that of Ulster, as either of them might have been correctly placed on the tomb of a relative of the Plantagenets, some of whom were Earls of Ulster. They were entitled to bear the cross now

known as that of St. George, Patron Saint of England, which is supposed to have been originally adopted from the Aquitaine Dukes, and seems to be the ancient cross borne on the banners of Aquitaine, and adopted by Henry II. in compliment to his wife Eleanor.

The second armorial bearing on the tomb is quarterly, first and fourth France, and second and third England. No observation is necessary to show that this was carved with propriety on the monument of a relative of Henry III. or of any other Sovereign of England up to the reign of George I.

The third escutcheon, (a Chief indented) is probably intended to represent the noble house of Butler. It is, however, impossible to offer more than a probable conjecture on this point, for we are ignorant of both the metal and tincture, and there are several names entitled to the same form of bearing, distinguished only in this particular.—Thus, for instance, Bavent bears Argent, a chief indented, sable; Butler, or, a chief indented azure; Power, Argent, a chief azure, &c. This shield may, notwithstanding, be reasonably taken as that of Butler, that family having been not only Counts Palatine of Tipperary, in which Holy Cross is situated, but, one of them, James, second Earl of Ormonde, being, about the time of the erection of this monument, great grandson of King Edward I. It has been incorrectly supposed that the position in which the last mentioned shield is placed with respect to the fourth escutcheon was intended to represent them as in the nature of being impaled. That, however, is not the case, for they are placed in two totally distinct compartments.—The only ground for the supposed impaling is, that the large shield, bearing France and England, quarterly occupies the compartments on the dexter side of the monument corresponding with those containing the two shields imagined to be impaled.

As to the fourth shield, I freely own my ignorance of the name to which the arms found upon it do properly belong. It certainly is a saltire between twelve guttes or pears or some such objects. Its field is not ermine as has been thought. Had it been ermine it might be fairly taken to represent the House of Desmond. It more closely resembles Desmond than the House of Kildare. I suspect it to be in some way connected with De Vere, Earl of Oxford, for an armorial ensign very much resembling it, viz., a saltire between twelve apples, is amongst other quarterings on the Tomb of a member of that family, Sir Francis De Vere, in the chapel of St. John the Evangelist at Westminster. I have not been able to find out the name these arms represent. It was easy for a sculptor, not well versed in heraldry, to represent the twelve apples in the form found on this escutcheon on the Holy Cross monument. An example of a somewhat similar mistake committed in carving the arms of Lady Margaret Brien, is to be seen in Holy Cross bridge. In the arms last mentioned, which were set up in 1626, a *crest* is given to the lady in question. This is a great breach

in the rules of heraldry, which forbid a crest being given to ladies, as they do not wear the helmet or morion, upon which the crest should be placed. Were one to indulge in the suggestions of fancy, this escutcheon with the saltire between twelve guttes, might be supposed a type of the grief which pervaded Ireland on the death of the good woman's son. It would, in that view of it, be properly blazoned, on a field azure, a cross of St. Patrick (which really is a saltire) between twelve *guttes des l'armes* proper. But let us dismiss so fanciful a thought, particularly as the mission of the Good Woman's Son in the collection of the Peter Pence was a very unpopular one.

I now come to the fifth shield, which is the extreme one on the sinister side of the monument. It is quite plain, or in the language of heraldry, argent. Shields of young men were formerly left blank until the wearer had, by some noble or valorous conduct of his own, earned an appropriate charge. Guillian writes that white shields used to be bestowed on such as were novices in martial deeds, to the end that they might, in future time, have them garnished with testimonies of their valorous deserts, until which time such shields were reckoned inglorious. It is in allusion to this practice that Virgil (*Æneid*) uses the words—

‘ ——— parmaque inglorius alba.’

Young Feorus Fionn, not having at the time of his death acquired a character in the ranks of chivalry, but rather the reverse, he being reckoned only, “*Princeps innocens*,” the white shield on his tomb was properly adapted to him—moreover, the field, Argent, might have been meant as an heraldic rebus (no unusual thing) on his name, Feorus *Fionn* or Pierce the Fair. Fionn, is the Irish for *white* or *fair*; and Guillian's Heraldry informs us that the term, *Argent*, sometimes signifies “*Albus* (white) *vel candidus*” (fair.)

Sir Richard Colt Hoare was sadly misinformed by whoever told him this monument was that of a person named O'Fogarty. The armorial bearings of O'Fogarty are a Fesse between three Garbs, a device not to be found on the monument. It seems to me that even the error of Sir Richard's informant, in substituting the name of O'Fogarty for that of Feorus Fionn, or whoever else the *Good Woman's Son* was, is a strong, though unintended confirmation, of the tradition respecting the true occupant of the tomb, the deviation from fact being merely by putting the name of the slayer instead of that of the slain. It shews that even the bungling cicerone of Sir Richard, knew that O'Fogarty, or his actions, had, in some way or other, been the cause of the erection of the tomb.

I must not seem to shut my eyes upon the manifest fact that the era of Feorus Fionn's death was at least a century and a half earlier than the erection of that part of Holy Cross Abbey in which the monument of the Good Woman's Son stands. The monument itself, exclusive of the style of architecture of the building which shelters it, affords proof that

it was not built more early than the year 1399, for the arms of France are represented on it as *three* Fleurs-de-lis, 2 and 1 : while we know that, previous to the reign of Henry IV., France was represented on the Heraldic shield as *semé* des Fleurs-des-lis.

Let us now examine how the priority of Feorus Fionn's time to that of the monument would affect his right to the tomb, or the accuracy of that tradition which accords it to him, if he was the Good Woman's Son. This circumstance might at the first blush appear to negative the assertion that Feorus Fionn occupied this monument. Yet I think it is a strong ingredient in the argument, which seeks to establish that he was the occupant of it. He who bestows a little reflection on the history of the splendid tombs of that period, must admit that the most ornate of them were generally, or at all events frequently, erected long subsequently to the decease of those they were designed to commemorate. Many instances in elucidation of this may be found. Thus : Edward the Confessor had been some time buried, before the fame of his tomb being endowed with a miraculous power of curing diseases, induced William the Conqueror to adorn the sepulchre with a very sumptuous shrine of gold and silver. In like manner, Henry II., in 1163, erected a third and most sumptuous shrine to Edward's memory; and lastly, on the removal of Saint Edward the Confessor's body, from the old church of his own building to the chapel known at Westminster as that of the Confessor, King Henry II. erected anew another shrine to receive it.

In regard to the Holy Cross monument, it is quite plain to me that he to whose memory it was raised must have been dead long before it was built. I do not hesitate to believe, after a close inspection of this mausoleum, that its erection was contemporaneous with that of the part of the abbey in which it stands; even as the beautiful twisted pillars of the shrine, built as the depository in which The Rood was kept, actually support the walls, groinings, and weighty arches of the chapels on either side of it.

This shrine and the monument of the Good Woman's Son seem to be both formed of black marble from the same quarry, and to be coeval. He who minutely examines the elaborate masonry of the choir, the various side chapels and mullioned windows adorned with tracery, the ornamented arches, the lofty belfry, with arched ceiling pierced for the cords of a chime of large bells—I say he who examines those, and moreover reflects on the vastness of the entire pile, must admit that the building was a work of very slow progress. It was not uncommon in former times to have the erection of a single church extend over centuries. If we, therefore, suppose that the re-edification of this abbey was begun many years after the death of Feorus Fionn in 1233, and the confirmations or grants to the abbey by Henry III., it ceases to be any wonder that the monument of the Good Woman's Son, or the choir, in which it is placed, were not completed until the end of

fourteenth or commencement of the fifteenth century. By taking the view now suggested of events connected with Feorus Fionn and the re-edification of Holy Cross Abbey, we can readily account for the slab bearing an old sepulchral cross being placed as the table of the splendid more modern monument of the Good Woman's Son. There is no necessity to impute negligence to any person as the cause of having it where it is, within the beautiful exterior stone work, for nothing can be more reasonable than to believe that this more ancient slab originally covered the remains of the Good Woman's Son in a more humble and hastily constructed resting place within the Old Abbey, and that it accompanied them on their translation to the new one. I, for the present, leave it to others to decide whether Feorus Fionn and the Good Woman's Son were or were not the same person.

Having written thus much touching the monument of the Good Woman's Son, a few observations regarding the Lord Abbot of Holy Cross may not be unacceptable. It is well known that this ecclesiastic was a mitred abbot, and that he had episcopal jurisdiction within the abbey and its dependencies, exempt from the authority of the archbishop. He held temporal rank as an Earl, and, as such, had a seat in the upper house of parliament by the style and title of Lord Abbot of Holy Cross. The *Triumphalia*, a manuscript so often already referred to, gives a painting of his arms. From it they appear to have been, Sapphire, a monk's arm in a manch, pearl, (the colour of the Cistercian cassock) issuing from the sinister chief and bearing a crozier in pale, topaz. In the dexter base a mitre of the last with labels. Two fleurs-de-lis of the third. Over all a bend, checkie of the second and diamond. Crest a mitre, ruby, with a lozenge, sapphire, on its centre, and labels ruby. Motto, "*Arma militiæ nostræ.*" The fleurs-de-lis on these arms were probably borne in recognition of this abbey being subject to that of Clairvaux in France. Holy Cross Abbey was a daughter of Monaster-enay in the County Limerick, founded in 1148 or 1151, and which was itself a daughter of Mellifont Abbey in the County of Louth, founded in 1142 by Donough O'Carroll, Prince of Uriel, and supplied by St. Bernard with Cistercian monks from his abbey at Clairvaux. Afterwards, in 1249, Holy Cross was subjected to the Abbey of Furnes in Lancashire by the Abbot of Clairvaux in a general chapter of the order. The arms of the Abbey of Holy Cross were, Ruby, a *double* Cross, diamond. This escutcheon as depicted in the *Triumphalia* is impaled with, or, a chevron gules, being the armorial bearing of the name of Stafford. A person of that name must have been abbot here. The motto of the abbey was "*A Cruce Salus.*"

In a wall at the abbey end of the bridge of Holy Cross is an inscription, setting forth the time when the present bridge across the river Suir was erected on the site of a more ancient bridge. Over the inscription are

set in separate compartments and carved on stone, the arms of Butler and those of O'Brien.—The inscription runs thus :

“ Ad viatorem.—Nicolaus Cowli me fabricavit.

Jacobus Butler baro de Dunboyne et D.

Margareta Brien ejus uxor hunc

pontem collapsum erexerunt et suis

Insignibus adornarunt anno Domini 1626.

Dic precor ante abitum verbo non amplius uno evadat stygios
auctor uterq. lacus.”

Into what a curious mythological form has a Christian prayer been here converted by some, no doubt pious, although pedantic monk of Holy Cross !

The annexed documents, transcribed from the Triumphalia, afford some curious information respecting the revenues of Holy Cross Abbey at the latter end of the 16th century.

“ Extent’ Monasterii S. Crucis ibidem fact’ per Mihe Fitzwilliam supervisorem primo die Februarii 1563.

“ The spiritualities and temporalities of the Abbey of Holy Cross had from good and ancient men within the diocese of Cashel ; the vicaradge of Kilmor in the diocese of Killaloe excepted. Elsewher are territories and renewes belonging to the monasterie not heere wholie specified.

“ The Abbey, Rathcloghe, Glanebane, Carragane, Clogane, and Lis-negroghe—The spiritualities and temporalities set to O’Kearney and his nephewes at £140 sterg.

“ Granseaghe—The temporalities set to Robert Saint John at £7 sterg.

“ Copia vera. I Owen Rian of Beakestowne fermour, aged of five scoare yeares or thereabouts, do depose uppon my salvation the tieth of the Barronie of Ballycormock to belonge to the Abbey and House of Holie Crosse. My cause of Knowledg is that I have seene the Abbott of the saide Abbey, Phelip Purcell, gatheringe the tiethes, his procurators being then James Roe Thrihie and James More in Charvine. And that by the license the Baron of Logmoe the saide abbott builded a Barne uppon the lands of Beakestowne, to gather the saide tieths. Written in the yeare of our Lorde 1623, and in the 12th day of August, being presente when the aforesaid deposition was made by the above named Owen Rian ; Fr. Lucas archer de Sta. Cruce abbas, Fr. Thomas Bernardus Learnj ejusdem S. Crucis monachus, Petrus Forstall, Sr. David Henesie Prieste.

“ Copia vera. Witnesses produced sworn and examined concerninge the churche of Templebegge and the parishe therof. First John Mac William of th’ adge of four scoare yeares or therabouts, being dulle examined and by vertue of his oath, saith that the churche of Templebegge was duringe his remembrance governed by the Lo. Abbotts of Holie Crosse from time to time without any disturbance of the Lo. Archbishop of Cashell or any in his name ; and for prooffe therof saied

that Hugh Mac Donoughe had thereof the profit for the tearme of five yeeres for the Lo. Abbott that was then, and was bounde to pay som butter and eggs unto the Lo. Abbott; and further the said John saith that the third parte of th' alter and profit of the churge of Temple-wotraghe doth follow the Abbey of Holie Crosse, and th' other two partes the Lord of Cashell from time to time doth hold. Melleaghlin Mac William of th' adge of seaventie yeeres or therabouts agreed with the former mattr. and substance, and their cause of knowledge is that they bothe weare borne and brought up in the aforesaide parishes. Written in the yeare of our Lord 1623, and in the 12th day of August; being presente bearing witness the undernamed. Fr. Lucas Archer de Sta Cruce Abbas. Fr. Thomas Bernardus Larny ejusdem S. Crucis monachay, Petrus Forstall, Sr. David Henesie Prieste.

REPLY TO MR. COOKE'S OBJECTIONS TO THE SEDILIA THEORY.

BY JOHN G. A. PRIM.

[*Read at the Meeting of September 5th.*]

Although I feel bound to acknowledge the great research and extreme ingenuity evinced by Mr. Cooke in drawing up his highly interesting paper, as well, also, as to express my thanks for the very flattering manner in which he notices my name, I must say that I am still far from being converted to the theory which that gentleman adopts, or even shaken in the view which I put forward myself on the subject of the probable object and intention of the very curious monument which I call the Sedilia, but which he declares to be the tomb of a benefactor of Holy Cross Abbey. My reasons for adhering to my former opinion, the testimony of Mr. Cooke, and the curious manuscript which he adduces, notwithstanding, I now beg leave to lay as briefly as possible before the Society.

It will be seen that Mr. Cooke mainly founds his speculations upon the authority of Father Hartry, who was a monk residing at Holy Cross in the seventeenth century; and he points out the difficulty of coming to the conclusion that a clergyman belonging to the Monastery could have been ignorant of the use of so remarkable a piece of architecture. I would fully agree in this opinion had the Abbey continued to be used as a religious and conventual building to Father Hartry's time, and had he been regularly admitted amongst its brotherhood. But such was

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

Page 8, line 22, for *Richard Purcell O'Gorman* read *Nicholas Purcell O'Gorman*.

Page 17, lines 32 and 36, for *carn* read *cairn*.

Page 18, lines 11 and 16, for *carn* read *cairn*.

Ib., line 41, for *outstriped* read *outstripped*.

Page 19, line 18, for *hand* read *hands*.

Page 21, line 10, for *carn* read *cairn*.

Page 24, line 15, for *was* read *were*.

Page 29, line 15, after *eighteen*, add *to two feet six by twelve*.

Page 48, line 3, for *santi* read *sancti*.

Page 55, line 27, for *intermarrige* read *intermarriage*.

Page 63, lines 23 and 27, strike out the comma after *prosapia* and *colligendum*.

Page 64, line 28, for *consequenee* read *consequence*.

Page 76, line 25, after *grantee of the crown*, add—*Indeed with regard to the Lucas Archer referred to by Mr. Cooke, he was not recognised by the crown, neither did he reside at Holy Cross, as appears by the following extract from the Regal Visitation of 1615 (Library R. I. Academy):—"Sir Lucas Archer, Titular Abbott of the Holy Crosse, and the Pope's Vicar-Generall of the Diocesse of Ossory, Archdeacon of the same, dwelling at Kilkenny."*

Page 80, line 41, for *Epipheny* read *Epiphany*.

Ib., line 43, for *assencion* read *ascension*.

Page 89, line 15, after *quarterly*, add—*From a perfect impression of this seal, obtained from Mr. A. Murphy, King-street, Kilkenny, it appeared that the inscription was as follows—SIGILLVM. GARGIANI. GBVWV̄CĒSIS.—the meaning of which was very obscure ; it appeared, however, to have no reference to the Dominican Abbey. The inscription was in Lombardic characters, and the seal seemed to be of the fifteenth century.*

Page 90, line 13, for *mountings* read *mounting*.

Page 91, line 27, for *refer* read *refers*.